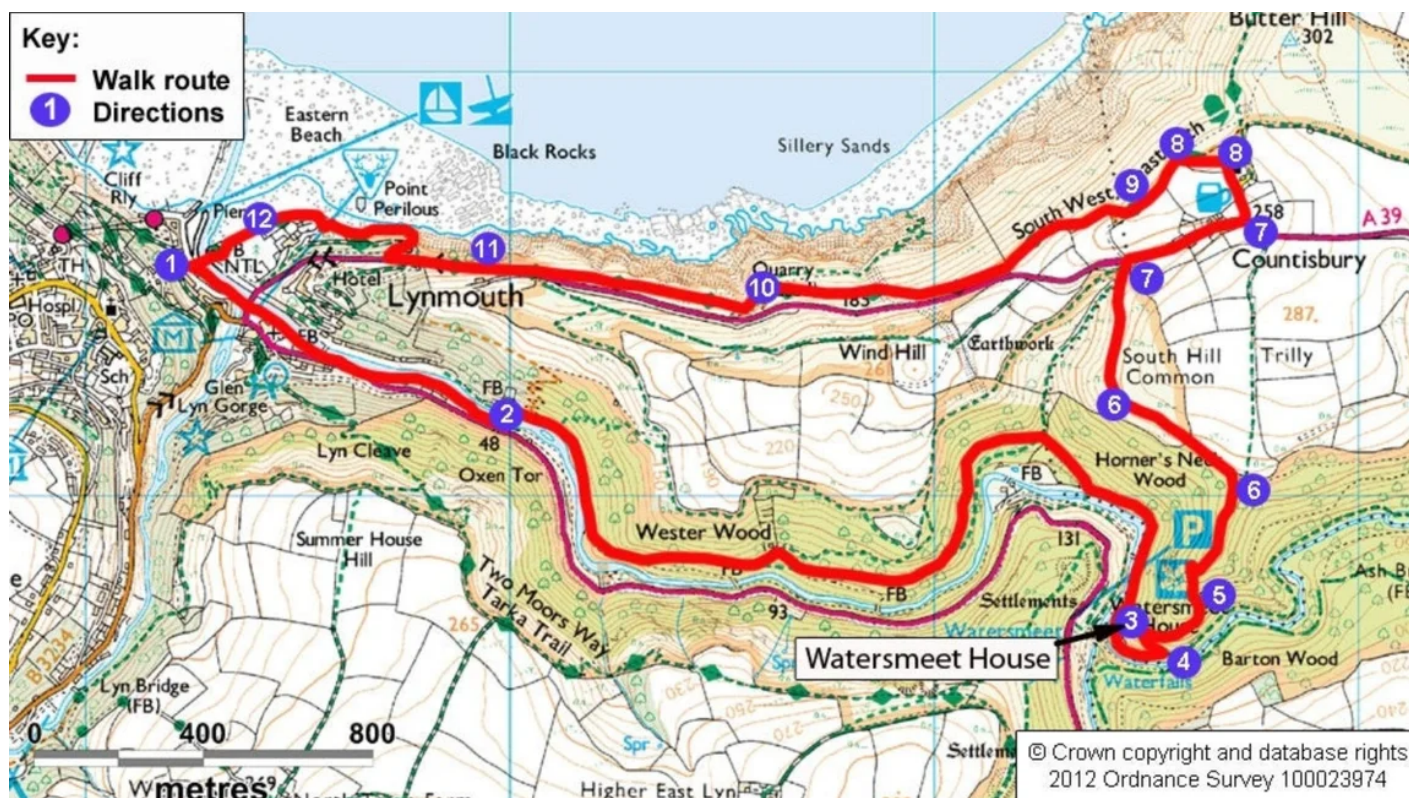


DEVON

Lynmouth circular walk via Watersmeet and Countisbury

Starting in the picturesque harbour town of Lynmouth, this interesting and varied walk takes in some of the best scenery this part of Exmoor has to offer, including coastal views, woodland and waterfalls. Along the way, look out for Watersmeet House, remnants of Iron Age hillforts and wildlife including dippers, deer and maybe even an otter.



Information

Address: Lynmouth public car park, Countisbury Hill, Devon EX35 6ES

OS map: Landranger 180; Explorer OL9

Activity: Walking

Challenging: Varied terrain, including woodland, exposed coastal path and steps. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Please keep your dog on a lead, particularly during the spring on farmed land and moorland or where there is stock grazing or signs of deer or wild ponies.

Full trail: Miles: 5.5 (km: 8.8)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 2 hours 30 mins

Terrain

This circular walk follows a well-signposted route over a mixture of well-trodden footpaths, mud tracks and pavement. It runs along a shady river valley, up through woodland and out onto the South West Coast Path.

Part of the route is on an exposed path on the side of a high cliff. There are some steps.

Some parts are uneven and may be slippery when wet or when covered with leaves in the autumn.

Total steps: 12

Start point: Lynmouth public car park, Countisbury Hill, grid ref: SS 723 494

1. Walk out of the car park at the top left corner towards the white metal bridge that crosses the river just ahead of you, keeping the East Lyn River on your left. Cross the bridge and turn immediately right. Continue walking upstream, with the river now on your right. Please be careful crossing the road – it's a public highway. Follow the footpath upstream towards Watersmeet.
2. Follow the green public footpath signed 'Watersmeet 1¼'. Across the water you can see Middleham Memorial Gardens. Where the path forks, there's a fingerpost signed 'Watersmeet 1¼ Riverside Walk' to the right and 'Watersmeet 1¼ Woodland Walk' to the left. We'd recommend turning left and following the path as it meanders along the side of the valley, but you can take either path to end up at Watersmeet.
3. When you arrive at Watersmeet House, cross the two bridges to its right and take in the waterfalls just above the convergence of the East Lyn River and the Hoar Oak Water – a beautiful place whatever the weather or the season. Before continuing your walk, you can rest a while on the banks of the East Lyn or, in the spring and summer, our tea garden is open for cream teas and cakes. Just before you reach the House, you'll pass an information board about Glenthorne Fisheries, showing the permitted fishing pools and contact information. You can find information about fishing and canoeing on the East Lyn River under the 'Things to see and do' tab of the Watersmeet homepage.
4. Keeping Watersmeet House to your left and the East Lyn River to your right, follow the footpath behind the house signed 'Footpath Rockford 1½'. At the fingerpost marked Countisbury, go left up a zigzag path through the woods.
5. Follow the path up through the woods and, as it levels out around the side of the valley, look for where it splits – take a sharp left here. There is no signpost. Keep on the main path as it zigzags up towards Trilly Ridge. To your left, the view will open out over the Iron Age hill forts of Wind Hill and North Myrtleberry.

Suitable footwear and clothing is advised as coastal weather can be changeable.

6. At the four-finger signpost, where there is a dry-stone wall and a gate in front of you, turn left and follow 'Winston's Path' round the side of the hill towards Countisbury. At the head of Chiselcombe – a steep-sided valley that falls away to your left – you'll come to a fingerpost signed to Countisbury. Follow this path through the gate and across the field towards the buildings ahead of you – this is Exmoor Bunkhouse. Go through the gate at the end of the field on the left and down onto the road. Please be careful of traffic.
 7. Turn right and walk along the road past Exmoor Bunkhouse to the Blue Ball pub. Cross the road here and walk up the lane to the right of the car park to Countisbury Church. Go through the gate and follow the path through the churchyard and out of the gate behind the church onto the grassy cliffs.
 8. Turn left and walk along the grassy path until you come to a three-finger signpost set into a dry-stone wall to your left – you will also see a small cairn. Turn right here following the South West Coast Path – the symbol for the path is an acorn. It can seem as if you're walking off the edge of the cliff but as you follow the path round to your left, you'll see it continues along the cliffside all the way down to Lynmouth. There are fantastic views from here, and on a clear day you can see all the way to Wales.
 9. Follow the path as it skirts along the cliffs, pass through a gate and carry straight on. You may spot roe deer on this part of the path.
 10. Keep following the signs for 'coast path' along the cliff towards Lynmouth until it reaches the main A39 Lynmouth–Minehead road. Please be careful of traffic here. On the opposite side of the road to you is a signpost showing 'Public Bridleway Wind Hill 2/3 mile.' You can choose to make a short detour here up onto the ramparts of Wind Hill Iron Age fort, as mentioned in the previous step. At the signpost, turn right into the lay-by and walk to the end where there is a South West Coast Path signpost. Follow the path along the top of the bank, keeping you above and away from the traffic. Please make sure your dogs are on leads.
 11. At the next three-finger post, follow the acorn symbol and the sign 'Public Footpath Lynmouth'. Stay on this path as it zigzags its way down the hill to sea level.
 12. Where the path meets the tarmac drive at the bottom of the hill, turn left and continue until you find yourself on the banks of the East Lyn River in Lynmouth. To your left, from the bridge, you'll be able to see the car park where you started this walk.
- End point: Lynmouth public car park, Countisbury Hill, grid ref: SS724124
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